

He became a lifelong member of the NAACP where he helped build plans to desegregate the school system. He made numerous medical mission trips to Haiti. And he was a mentor to many up-and-coming doctors to whom he was known as the Godfather of Medicine for his loving and kind manner.

I am proud to have had someone like Dr. Ball working in the First Congressional District of Georgia. Simply put, Dr. Ball is leaving Savannah and much of the rest of the world a better place than he found it.

Dr. Ball's family will be in my thoughts and prayers during this most difficult time.

BORIS NEMTSOV AND RUSSIAN MALIGN INFLUENCE

(Ms. KAPTUR asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. KAPTUR. Madam Speaker, I rise in commemoration of the life of Boris Nemtsov who was tragically assassinated by Vladimir Putin's Russian regime 5 years ago this week in Moscow. Boris served as deputy prime minister and was a prominent voice for political freedom in Russia itself.

Cities across the world have commemorated Boris' sacrifice, including here in Washington, D.C., which named the square outside the Russian Embassy Boris Nemtsov Plaza. Just recently, Czech authorities in Prague have joined in solidarity.

In the years since Boris' assassination, Russia's efforts to dismantle democratic institutions across the globe have increased, including here in the United States where they are continuing to interfere in the elections of this year.

We must stand together against Russia's aggression and malign behavior. Sanctions are a commonsense step.

Today, I call upon the Trump administration to broaden stronger, targeted sanctions on Russia. To keep backpedaling, as the Trump administration has done, on an enemy of liberty is not acceptable.

PUBLIC SCHOOLS WEEK

(Ms. WILD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. WILD. Madam Speaker, as we mark Public Schools Week, I want to recognize the extraordinary educators across my community and our country.

In spite of deep, systemic inequities we face in funding for our public schools and this administration's proposed further cuts, there are efforts in every school district to teach and support our young people in every aspect of their lives:

Programs like the Allentown School District's partnership with Lehigh Carbon Community College, which allows students to earn an associate's degree before leaving high school.

Initiatives like the efforts in Bethlehem School District to provide universal screening for students' mental health challenges and to increase community involvement.

Robust arts education programs like those featured in the Freddy Awards, hosted each year by the State Theatre in Easton, recognizing exceptional high school theater departments across the region.

Vital services like the food pantry in East Stroudsburg School District to support food insecure students, and business education projects like a coffee shop run by students in the same district, providing those students an invaluable experience.

When we invest in public education, we invest in our common future as a country. Let us commit to making those investments full and equitable.

CLIMATE CHANGE IS A GLOBAL PROBLEM

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. WILD). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2019, the gentleman from New York (Mr. ESPAILLAT) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Madam Speaker, today we are convening our monthly special order hour of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus to talk about a pressing issue to our Nation, to our planet, in fact, and especially to communities of color.

Climate change is a real global problem. It is affecting folks around the world contributing to natural disasters and droughts that lead to immigration and increased conflict.

We have seen how the Caribbean, which stands in the pathway of natural disasters, has been hit time and time again from Superstorm Maria to Hurricane Irma to the recent earthquakes in Puerto Rico. We have seen how this region of the world, the Caribbean, which is our third border, continually gets hammered by natural disasters.

In fact, just 2 days ago, the National Security, Military and Intelligence Panel of the Center for Climate and Security, a nonpartisan security policy institute, released a damning report. Within the report it said that higher levels of warming will pose a catastrophic and likely irreversible global security risk over the course of the 21st century.

Last September, the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change released yet another dire warning that the effects of climate change are already irreversible, and we only have just about a decade to act before it is too late.

One thing that is important, though, about climate change is the disproportionate impact it has on communities of color. This is called environmental injustice, and that is why it is important that we address this from the Congressional Hispanic Caucus perspective, the perspective of those representing communities of color.

Climate change affects our everyday lives in big ways and small ways. Take my grandson, for example. He suffers from asthma and acute allergies, and other health issues that a lot of our kids have that are worsened by air pollution.

The issue is communities of color are not the biggest contributors to the pollution of climate change. In fact, they contribute less but are disproportionately hurt by climate change. We take public transportation. We don't fill our streets with very expensive polluting cars, but we bear the greatest burden from this and many other pollutants. This is also called environmental injustice.

That is why I have introduced a resolution on environmental justice to ensure that the government acknowledges and addresses the disproportional harm that climate change has on our community and communities of color.

Let me just take a moment to talk about some of my other work on this issue, because I believe it is a good summary of aspects that need to be addressed.

I was proud to support H.R. 9, the Climate Action Now Act, which passed the House last year and will keep the U.S. in the historic Paris climate accord. I was able to include an amendment to that bill stating that climate justice and environmental justice must be included in our efforts to meet the Paris Agreement and mitigate and adapt to climate change.

When we apply funding and when we allocate funding to address climate change, those communities in crisis must be given the funding first. This must be a core tenet of our policies to address climate change. Every law we pass and every action we take to mitigate and adapt to climate change must include acknowledgment and protections for marginalized and frontline communities who bear the burden of climate change.

One of my predecessors in the U.S. Congress, the late, great Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., one of the great civil rights leaders of our times, led year after year his Powell amendments to ensure Federal funding did not support segregation. Every time he introduced the amendments, they would be voted down. They would be systematically shut down. But yet he continued to present them year after year after year. Finally, during the 1960s in the middle of that decade when the civil rights legislation was drafted and passed, that legislation which still benefits many of us across America, it was the Powell amendment that was included in civil rights legislation.

Environmental justice is my Powell amendment, and I believe we must work to ensure that in every bill this House considers environmental justice is upheld and advanced.

I have also introduced the Green Climate Fund Authorization Act which commits the United States to provide climate finances to keep the planet

under 1.5 degrees Celsius of global warming.

□ 1515

The Green Climate Fund is an independent, multilateral fund established by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to help developing countries limit or reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to climate change.

We often read about the migration dynamic playing out on our southern border, and we think very often that those families are fleeing violence. That may be the case for some families, but many of them are also fleeing food security issues manifesting themselves in the triangle countries because of a horrible drought caused by climate change.

Developing countries have limited capacity to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions, and through the Green Climate Fund, the U.S. can contribute our fair share to enable mitigation and adaptation activities that uphold environmental justice across the globe.

Because it is these exact nations that are also on the front line of climate change, though they have contributed the least to these causes. Yet, one of the most important new approaches to combating climate change that has received a lot of traction and attention in the past year is the Green New Deal. I was proud to be an early supporter of this bold proposal, and many of my colleagues have since signed on to it and support it as well.

The Green New Deal pushes us to reach net-zero emissions and a 100 percent renewable economy to stop polluting our planet and ensure a safe climate for generations, for all of us, to come. It epitomizes environmental justice for frontline communities, especially underresourced groups, communities of color, Native Americans, people with disabilities, children, and seniors.

The Green New Deal calls for a just transition for communities and workers to ensure that there are jobs and training for a clean economy. The Green New Deal will save American families money with investments in weatherization, public transportation, and modern infrastructure.

We often talk about the infrastructure bill. Whether it is \$1 trillion or \$2 trillion, it must be built green.

It recognizes that combating climate change is an important intersection for promoting clean air and water and providing nutritious food, affordable and safe housing, and high-quality healthcare and jobs.

The Green New Deal recognizes that we need to build resiliency in the face of worsening and more frequent climate-related disasters and that marginalized communities often bear the brunt of these disasters.

Arguably, the most important aspect about the Green New Deal is that it forces us to think about combating climate change, not just in a singular pol-

icy aimed at emissions, but with all the policies we consider here in Congress, whether it is energy, education, the economy, jobs, or infrastructure.

We need serious investments to mitigate and adapt to climate change, but it will cost us more in the long term if we do not act now, financially and existentially. Climate change, ultimately, is an existential threat to all of us across America and across the planet.

By the time a child born today retires, in 2085, the U.S. will be spending \$300 billion each year on climate resiliency.

The time to invest is now. In fact, the time to invest was two decades ago.

But here we are. We need serious investment in our infrastructure and our transportation systems. We need to invest in green roof technology and innovative urban agriculture to address not just the carbon emissions of the agricultural field, but also to address intersectional issues of food security and climate change.

Earlier this year, our Democratic majority, led by Speaker NANCY PELOSI and Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chair PETER DEFAZIO, released a framework for infrastructure investment that takes many components of the Green New Deal into account.

It makes bold investments in public transportation systems to harness zero-emission technology and reduce congestion. It ensures that newly proposed transit projects are judged on their capacity to reduce emissions and congestion.

The framework includes provisions like those in the Transportation Alternatives Enhancement Act, which will prioritize projects that promote biking, walking, and other alternative, cleaner forms of transportation and infrastructure. The plan will boost investment in resiliency and green infrastructure to a degree that we have not yet seen before. It will make improvements in regional water resources to protect local ecosystems across the Nation.

In short, Democrats are proud to put forward proposals that will not only protect our planet but will invest in America's communities, invest in American workers, and invest in America's youth and future generations so we are prepared to tackle this momentous task in the decades to come. And the Green New Deal is one of the ways we are doing just that.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. BARRAGAN), my colleague, the second vice chairperson of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus.

Ms. BARRAGAN. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding and for holding this Special Order to address the impact of the fossil fuel industry on Latinos and how a Green New Deal can address the needs in our communities.

From sea level rise, to the location of power plants, to fossil fuel extraction, to the urban heat island effect, the in-

equities from our energy system and who bears its consequences are everywhere. People of color are on the front line of this issue. We are hit first and worst.

We need a climate bill that rises to the scale of both the climate crisis and the damage from environmental racism that impacts my district and the districts like it across the country.

The best way for us to understand these challenges and how to overcome them is to meet environmental justice communities where they are.

Our local challenges can provide useful information for Federal climate policy that can address environmental justice issues across the country.

America needs to lead on a just transition away from fossil fuels, and climate solutions must account for what that means for communities like mine. We deal with pollution from oil refineries and ongoing urban oil drilling, which has a direct impact on the quality of the air we breathe.

At the same time that the fossil fuel industry has a disproportionate footprint in minority communities, these industries often provide jobs, including union jobs, to my constituents. As we work to unwind the fossil fuel economy, we need our climate policy to ensure a just transition includes the needs of communities of color. This means creating union jobs in the clean energy industry with great benefits, and it means opportunities for minority-owned businesses to play a role in the clean energy future of tomorrow.

We must also focus on air emissions from ports and the communities near them bearing the burden. In my district, I have the Port of Los Angeles, one of the most ambitious ports in the country when it comes to reducing emissions. At the same time, the port is a significant source of air and climate pollution, and communities in my district believe the best path forward is for the port to achieve zero emissions as quickly as possible.

These are challenges that face ports throughout our country. Our climate policy must invest in America's ports to keep them competitive and on a pathway to zero emissions.

As Democrats are in the majority, we are in a position to move swiftly and boldly on this issue, and we must do so.

Madam Speaker, I look forward to working with my colleagues this year to craft bold climate solutions that leave no community behind.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ), my colleague.

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from New York, Representative ESPAILLAT, for holding this incredibly important hour on not just the climate crisis but the Green New Deal, in particular.

As I was preparing for this evening, I would be remiss but to say that, last night, we had a national Democratic debate, and not a single question was asked about our climate crisis.

Right now, the global consensus, the IPCC report coming out the U.N., is sounding the alarm on what will happen if we do not keep emissions down to contain our warming levels below 1.5 degrees Celsius. But if you look at today, we are on track to hit 3 degrees Celsius by 2100. This can bring unprecedented chaos to our order.

Throughout this entire year, as we discussed the Green New Deal, I have noticed that there has been an awful lot of misinformation about what is inside this resolution. A tremendous amount of wild claims, everything from saying we are seeking to ban airplanes to ending ice cream. As a consequence, I realized that many of my colleagues have never even read the resolution that they are speaking on. They haven't opened a single word of it. It is actually only about—I have it right in front of me—14 pages long.

So I have decided that since some of my colleagues across the aisle could not, for some reason, read the resolution, that perhaps this hour would be spent best reading it to them for the public record.

So, today, what I would like to do is to read the Green New Deal resolution for all those who are interested, who may want to fire this up on C-SPAN, or who may want to sit in the audience today.

H. Res. 109, resolution recognizing the duty of the Federal Government to create a Green New Deal.

Whereas the October 2018 report entitled “Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5 Celsius” by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the November 2018 Fourth National Climate Assessment report found that—

(1) human activity is the dominant cause of observed climate change over the past century;

(2) a changing climate is causing sea levels to rise and an increase in wildfires, severe storms, droughts, and other extreme weather events that threaten human life, healthy communities, and critical infrastructure;

(3) global warming at or above 2 degrees Celsius beyond preindustrialized levels will cause—

(A) mass migration from the regions most affected by climate change;

(B) more than \$500 billion in lost annual economic output in the United States by the year 2100;

(C) wildfires that, by 2050, will annually burn at least twice as much forest area in the Western United States than was typically burned by wildfires in the years preceding 2019;

(D) a loss of more than 99 percent of all coral reefs on Earth;

(E) more than 350 million more people to be exposed globally to deadly heat stress by 2050; and

(F) a risk of damage to \$1 trillion of public infrastructure and coastal real estate in the United States; and

(4) global temperatures must be kept below 1.5 degrees Celsius above preindustrialized levels to avoid the most severe impacts of a changing climate, which will require—

(A) global reductions in greenhouse gas emissions from human sources of 40 to 60 percent from 2010 levels by 2030; and

(B) net-zero global emissions by 2050;

Whereas, because the United States has historically been responsible for a disproportionate

amount of greenhouse gas emissions, having emitted 20 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions through 2014, and has a high technological capacity, the United States must take a leading role in reducing emissions through economic transformation;

Whereas the United States is currently experiencing several related crises, with—

(1) life expectancy declining while basic needs, such as clean air, clean water, healthy food, and adequate healthcare, housing, transportation, and education, are inaccessible to a significant portion of the U.S. population;

(2) a four-decade trend of wage stagnation, deindustrialization, and antilabor policies that has led to—

(A) hourly wages overall stagnating since the 1970s despite increased worker productivity;

(B) the third-worst level of socioeconomic mobility in the developed world before the Great Recession;

(C) the erosion of earning and bargaining power of workers in the United States; and

(D) inadequate resources for public-sector workers to confront the challenges of climate change at local, State, and Federal levels; and

□ 1530

(3) the greatest income inequality since the 1920s, with—

(A) the top 1 percent of earners accruing 91 percent of gains in the first few years of economic recovery after the Great Recession;

(B) a large racial wealth divide amounting to a difference of 20 times more wealth between the average White family and the average Black family; and

(C) a gender earnings gap that results in women earning approximately 80 percent as much as men, at the median;

Whereas climate change, pollution, and environmental destruction have exacerbated systemic racial, regional, social, environmental, and economic injustices (referred to in this preamble as “systemic injustices”) by disproportionately affecting indigenous peoples, communities of color, migrant communities, deindustrialized communities, depopulated rural communities, the poor, low-income workers, women, the elderly, the unhoused, people with disabilities, and youth (referred to in this preamble as “frontline and vulnerable communities”);

Whereas, climate change constitutes a direct threat to the national security of the United States—

(1) by impacting the economic, environmental, and social stability of countries and communities around the world; and

(2) by acting as a threat multiplier;

Whereas the Federal Government-led mobilizations during World War II and the New Deal created the greatest middle class that the United States has ever seen, but many members of frontline and vulnerable communities were excluded from many of the economic and societal benefits of those mobilizations; and

Whereas the House of Representatives recognizes that a new national, social, industrial, and economic mobilization on a scale not seen since World War II and the New Deal era is a historic opportunity—

(1) to create millions of good, high-wage jobs in the United States;

(2) to provide unprecedented levels of prosperity and economic security for all people of the United States; and

(3) to counteract systemic injustices: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of the House of Representatives that—

(1) it is the duty of the Federal Government to create a Green New Deal—

(A) to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions through a fair and just transition for all communities and workers;

(B) to create millions of good, high-wage jobs and ensure prosperity and economic security for all people in the United States;

(C) to invest in the infrastructure and industry of the United States to sustainably meet the challenges of the 21st century;

(D) to secure for all people of the United States for generations to come—

(i) clean air and water;

(ii) climate and community resiliency;

(iii) healthy food;

(iv) access to nature; and

(v) a sustainable environment; and

(E) to promote justice and equity by stopping current, preventing future, and repairing historic oppression of indigenous peoples, communities of color, migrant communities, deindustrialized communities, depopulated rural communities, the poor, low-income workers, women, the elderly, the unhoused, people with disabilities and youth (referred to in this resolution as “frontline and vulnerable communities”);

(2) the goals described in subparagraphs (A) through (E) of paragraph (1) (referred to in this resolution as the “Green New Deal goals”) should be accomplished through a 10-year national mobilization (referred to in this resolution as the “Green New Deal mobilization”) that will require the following goals and projects—

(A) building resiliency against climate change-related disasters, such as extreme weather, including by leveraging funding and providing investments for community-defined projects and strategies;

(B) repairing and upgrading the infrastructure in the United States, including—

(i) by eliminating pollution and greenhouse gas emissions as much as technologically feasible;

(ii) by guaranteeing universal access to clean water;

(iii) by reducing the risks posed by climate impacts; and

(iv) by ensuring that any infrastructure bill considered by Congress addresses climate change;

(C) meeting 100 percent of the power demand in the United States through clean, renewable, and zero-emission energy sources, including—

(i) by dramatically expanding and upgrading renewable power sources; and

(ii) by deploying new capacity;

(D) building or upgrading energy-efficient, distributed, and “smart” power grids, and ensuring affordable access to electricity;

(E) upgrading all existing buildings in the United States and building new buildings to achieve maximum energy efficiency, water efficiency, safety, affordability, comfort, and durability, including through electrification;

(F) spurring massive growth in clean manufacturing in the United States and removing pollution and greenhouse gas emissions from manufacturing and industry as much as is technologically feasible, including by expanding renewable energy manufacturing and investing in existing manufacturing and industry;

(G) working collaboratively with farmers and ranchers in the United States to remove pollution and greenhouse gas emissions from the agricultural sector as much as is technologically feasible, including—

(i) by supporting family farming;

(ii) by investing in sustainable farming and land use practices that increase soil health; and

(iii) by building a more sustainable food system that ensures universal access to healthy food;

(H) overhauling transportation systems in the United States to remove pollution and

greenhouse gas emissions from the transportation sector as much as technologically feasible, including through investment in—

(i) zero-emission vehicle infrastructure and manufacturing;

(ii) clean, affordable, and accessible public transit; and

(iii) high-speed rail;

(I) mitigating and managing the long-term adverse health, economic, and other effects of pollution and climate change, including by providing funding for community-defined projects and strategies;

(J) removing greenhouse gases from the atmosphere and reducing pollution by restoring natural ecosystems through proven low-tech solutions that increase soil carbon storage, such as land preservation and afforestation;

(K) restoring and protecting threatened, endangered, and fragile ecosystems through locally appropriate and science-based projects that enhance biodiversity and support climate resiliency;

(L) cleaning up existing hazardous waste and abandoned sites, ensuring economic development and sustainability on those sites;

(M) identifying other emission and pollution sources and creating solutions to remove them; and

(N) promoting the international exchange of technology, expertise, products, funding, and services, with the aim of making the United States the international leader on climate action, and to help other countries achieve a Green New Deal;

(3) a Green New Deal must be developed through transparent and inclusive consultation, collaboration, and partnership with frontline and vulnerable communities, labor unions, worker cooperatives, civil society groups, academia, and businesses; and

(4) to achieve the Green New Deal goals and mobilization, a Green New Deal will require the following goals and projects—

(A) providing and leveraging, in a way that ensures that the public receives appropriate ownership stakes and returns on investment, adequate capital (including through community grants, public banks, and other public financing), technical expertise, supporting policies, and other forms of assistance to communities, organizations, Federal, State, and local government agencies, and businesses working on the Green New Deal mobilization;

(B) ensuring that the Federal Government takes into account the complete environmental and social costs and impacts of emissions through—

(i) existing laws;

(ii) new policies and programs; and

(iii) ensuring that frontline and vulnerable communities shall not be adversely affected;

(C) providing resources, training, and high-quality education, including higher education, to all people of the United States, with a focus on frontline and vulnerable communities, so that all people of the United States may be full and equal participants in the Green New Deal mobilization;

(D) making public investments in the research and development of new clean and renewable energy technologies and industries;

(E) directing investments to spur economic development, deepen and diversify industry and business in local and regional economies, and build wealth and community ownership, while prioritizing high-quality job creation and economic, social, and environmental benefits in frontline and vulnerable communities, and deindustrialized communities, that may otherwise struggle with the transition away from greenhouse gas intensive industries;

(F) ensuring the use of democratic and participatory processes that are inclusive of and led by frontline and vulnerable commu-

nities and workers to plan, implement, and administer the Green New Deal mobilization at the local level;

(G) ensuring that the Green New Deal mobilization creates high-quality union jobs that pay prevailing wages, hires local workers, offers training and advancement opportunities, and guarantees wage and benefit parity for workers affected by the transition;

(H) guaranteeing a job with a family-sustaining wage, adequate family and medical leave, paid vacations, and retirement security to all people of the United States;

(I) strengthening and protecting the right of all workers to organize, unionize, and collectively bargain free of coercion, intimidation, and harassment;

(J) strengthening and enforcing labor, workplace health and safety, antidiscrimination, and wage and hour standards across all employers, industries, and sectors;

(K) enacting and enforcing trade rules, procurement standards, and border adjustments with strong labor and environmental protections—

(i) to stop the transfer of jobs and pollution overseas; and

(ii) to grow domestic manufacturing in the United States;

(L) ensuring that public lands, waters, and oceans are protected and that eminent domain is not abused;

(M) obtaining the free, prior, and informed consent of indigenous peoples for all decisions that affect indigenous peoples and their traditional territories, honoring all treaties and agreements with indigenous peoples, and protecting and enforcing the sovereignty and land rights of indigenous peoples;

(N) ensuring a commercial environment where every businessperson is free from unfair competition and domination by domestic or international monopolies; and

(O) providing all people of the United States with—

(i) high-quality healthcare;

(ii) affordable, safe, and adequate housing;

(iii) economic security; and

(iv) clean water, clean air, healthy and affordable food, and access to nature.

That is every word in the Green New Deal, and I want every person in this body and across the country to ask themselves why this is so controversial.

Why is healthcare for every American so controversial?

Why is protecting our planet for the next generation so controversial?

Why is dignified labor and protection at work so controversial?

Why is taking on the fossil fuel industry so, so controversial?

Because, for years, we have prioritized the pursuit of profit at any and all human and environmental cost. I humbly ask my colleagues and my country to question our priorities for once, because our priorities have led to an unprecedented amount of income inequality to millions of people living in poverty and many more who feel unstable in their economic life.

So, please, as a moral, economic, and political prerogative, I humbly ask our country to care for our planet.

□ 1545

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from the great State of New York, Congresswoman OCASIO-CORTEZ, and the 98 Members who are cosponsors of the Green New Deal.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE).

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, allow me to thank the gentleman from New York for his friendship and for the recognition that the clarion call has to be called.

Let me thank my colleague and friend from New York as well, from the great borough of the Bronx, ALEXANDRIA OCASIO-CORTEZ, for her clarion call.

I want to take this from a perspective of civil rights and the idea that, most often, civil rights are defined by the movement of the 1960s, framed around the marches of poor people led by Dr. King and many others who saw the inequities dealing with the treatment of African Americans and others in the social justice system.

One might not think that that movement ties directly to where we are today. As a cosponsor of the Green New Deal, I see this as a question of social justice. When the foot soldiers marched, many did not understand why they were attempting to change the way people had lived for decades and, yes, centuries. They didn't fully understand that the unequal treatment under the law was oppressive and denied families, children, regions of the country the ability to reach their highest dream.

I represent, still, the many communities that are experiencing inequities. When I held a meeting some weeks ago to deal with what we call cancer clusters, I had a thousand people at a town-hall meeting. A chemical, creosote, had gotten into the soil of neighborhoods, which, in Texas, with your patches of land, front yard or back yard, you plant your fruit trees and other garden vegetables.

I asked: "If you have cancer or your relatives have cancer, would you stand up?" Two-thirds of that audience stood. Today, I am still getting calls from people in surrounding neighborhoods, talking about that chemical.

When you begin to look at purifying and cleaning, making sure the air quality is clean, making sure the soil quality is clean, it is looking at ways not to diminish people who are working in industries, who are in hardworking, blue-collar jobs, but to expand their vision of what can happen if you commit to the reasonable policies of the Green New Deal that speak to bringing everyone to the table and addressing this as a civil rights moment, not judging it on the inequities of race but on the inequities of the quality of your neighborhood and the quality of your life.

As I listened to the reading of the legislation, there is room at the table for everyone. There is room at the table for scientists. I was a member of the Science Committee for a good number of years. I believe in good science.

There is room at the table for technicians, people who are embracing technology.

There is room at the table for primary and secondary students who can

learn what climate change has done and what the impact is, and how science is connected to a green economy.

There is room at the table for elected officials.

There is room at the table for large industries that have in their companies huge departments dealing with the environment.

The sadness is that that information is not given to all of those who look at these companies and see a particular purpose, but they don't know that they are working on environmental issues. My argument would be about education and information, and understanding that there is so much about quality of life that is tied to the quality of the air and water.

Now, just one moment of deviation, as a member of the Homeland Security Committee, as one of the first Members who went to her district to speak about the coronavirus, asking why the administration had done nothing and had not given information to the American public, who said that it was urgent that they give this information. Unfortunately, in a presentation which we have seen when we deal with climate change or the Green New Deal, it was reported to us, Members of Congress, that there was nothing to worry about; it wouldn't get here to the United States.

Well, I dealt with H1N1 as a Member of Congress, and the Ebola virus, which hit Dallas, Texas. I am in Houston, and before we understood what it was, various providers had treated the individual but had already left the State. Information can save lives.

Just recently, before I left Houston, I had a press conference to at least share with the community the various documents and handouts about how one should react to any signs of a flu-like symptom, not to diagnose yourself, but to get to a health provider. In the Green New Deal, it talks about access to healthcare.

Many of my constituents died from creosote because they had no access to healthcare. When I say creosote, the ramifications—cancer, respiratory illnesses.

I rise today to join my colleagues in a clarion call. I am supposed to be at the Homeland Security Committee right now, but I really wanted to join in this commitment that we need to inform, educate, and activate so that we can begin to be on the journey in America, the greatest Nation in the world.

In fact, the United States of America is the Nation now that is being looked on to bring relief on the coronavirus. And we are still missing a team or a plan.

But the greatest Nation in the world can now be at the forefront of leading the idea that green is real and right, and it is good for the American people, good for our families, good for our children, good for the leadership that we must give to developing nations and other nations around the world.

I rise to join my colleagues and thank them again for their leadership.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Madam Speaker, I thank Congresswoman SHEILA JACKSON LEE from the State of Texas, Congresswoman NANETTE BARRAGAN from the State of California, and Congresswoman ALEXANDRIA OCASIO-CORTEZ from the great State of New York for bringing important facts to the table that will dispel the scare tactics that are being deployed and peddled across America about this Green New Deal. It will save lives.

I represent the district that has one of the highest asthma rates in the State, Harlem. There is a significant number of bus depots in Harlem polluting the air. In East Harlem, the children have one of the highest levels of respiratory diseases and asthma. Washington Heights is cut right through its heart by a polluting railway called the Cross Bronx Expressway. We are surrounded by highways, and we are surrounded by pollution, leading to a very low quality of air, which leads to disease and leads to death.

This has been an enlightened conversation about the Green New Deal. I hope America understands the particulars behind it and that we are better equipped and better informed to make the right decisions in support of this lifesaving piece of legislation.

Madam Speaker, I thank you for this opportunity to allow the Congressional Hispanic Caucus to talk about the importance of protecting our planet in the way in which the Green New Deal will do, while we are also making our Nation better.

I thank everyone who was able to participate, and I yield back the balance of my time.

ISSUES OF THE DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2019, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. GOHMERT. Madam Speaker, first, I want to address a bill that we voted on this afternoon, one of the three bills under the suspension of the rules, H.R. 35, to amend section 249 of title 18, United States Code, to specify lynching as a hate crime act.

I was in the Judiciary Committee when we took up the hate crimes act. I know there were people who said because of James Byrd, the African American who was drug behind a truck by three individuals, that that was a poster case that demanded hate crime legislation.

Actually, I was quite comfortable if all three of the defendants in that case had gotten the death penalty. In Texas, we do have the death penalty for such a crime as that. Two of the three got the death penalty. One got life in prison. And I felt like the death penalty, from everything I had read, was appropriate.

I am someone who has looked two defendants in the eye and sentenced them to death. It is a very somber, serious thing to do, but the crimes justified it in those cases.

I was talking to my friend, Congressman BOBBY RUSH, a man who has been fighting injustice and unfairness, seems like, his whole life. He is absolutely one of the kindest, most decent people to talk to and deal with here in Congress. He is just a real gentleman. This was Congressman RUSH's bill. And I mentioned to him after the vote—I did vote “no” on this.

Now, there are some great findings for the first six pages. But at page 7, we finally get to actually what the act does. It says: Whoever conspires with another to violate section 245, 247, or 249 of this title or section 901 of the Civil Rights Act shall be punished in the same manner as a completed violation of such section, except that if the maximum term of imprisonment for such completed violation is less than 10 years, the person may be imprisoned for not more than 10 years.

That is ridiculous. First of all, I have trouble with the Federal nexus of lynching. I would, like in the James Byrd case, prefer that those defendants be tried under the Texas capital murder statute rather than under the Federal hate crimes law. Because under the Texas capital murder laws, the defendants could get the death penalty. And they should have been tried under that and should have gotten it.

I have such respect for Congressman RUSH. Lynching is more serious than a 10-year maximum sentence. And I would much rather, if somebody is lynched in Texas, they be subject, under Texas law, to the death penalty rather than a 10-year maximum. It sends entirely the wrong message about how serious this is. I couldn't vote for a 10-year maximum when we are talking about lynching.

I know there are some States that don't have good criminal laws, that maybe they would prefer the Federal Government try such cases. But Congressman RUSH said this was the best he could get an agreement on. But, God bless him, he knows better than most people how serious this is.

So on the one hand, I applaud his efforts at trying to bring people to justice who would commit such a heinous act, and I regret needing to vote “no.” But I just felt like this is too serious to be handled at such a low level.

□ 1600

So I thank Congressman RUSH for his efforts. He is indeed a very fine man. It is a pleasure to interact with him here in Congress, but I couldn't vote for that. That is just too serious.

I have had a friend I met here years ago named Philip Haney. He was one of the finest, most patriotic, competent people I have ever known in my life, a man of absolute honesty, complete integrity, who cared deeply about the future of this country. He also was a